

# ***TERMS***

## **Assessor**

The Assessor is a full-time, appointed town employee, professionally educated and state certified as a municipal assessment officer.



## **Assessment**

Connecticut law requires all real estate, motor vehicles, and certain types of personal property to be assessed at 70% of fair market value. Fair market value is defined as the price established between a willing buyer and a willing seller taking into consideration all the uses to which a property is adapted.

Connecticut courts have established criteria, which Assessors must use to establish fair market value.

## **Revaluation**

Towns and cities that do not adhere to the revaluation requirement will be penalized 10% of their state grants.

Revaluations are required to ensure uniformity in property valuations.

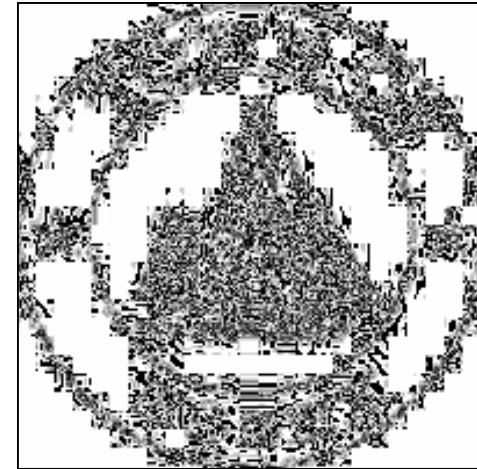
A revaluation requires studying market data.

In some instances it is necessary to review those properties that have sold. We also study those properties that have sold two or more times since the last revaluation. This review is necessary to ensure that the data on the property record card matches the data and the picture on file.

At the same time the Assessor's Office must continue to do the regular assessment work as well as follow-up on building permits that will help keep the Assessor's records accurate.

## **Grand List**

After individual property assessments have been determined, the Assessor compiles a complete listing of all property. The total assessments of all listed property is called the Grand List.



# ***A GUIDE TO YOUR ASSESSMENT***

## **Questions & Answers About Your 2008 Real Property**

## Essex Town Hall

29 West Avenue

Essex, CT 06426

Telephone: 860-767-4340

Fax: 860-767-8509

[www.essexct.gov](http://www.essexct.gov)

### Town Hall Office Hours

Monday..... 9 am to 4 pm

Tuesday..... 9 am to 4 pm

Wednesday ..... 9 am to 4 pm

Thursday ..... 9 am to 4 pm

Friday ..... 9 am to 4 pm

### **Who makes up the Board of Assessment Appeals?**

Members of the Board are elected for four-year terms. They are required by law to be electors or residents of Essex. There are three Board Members.

### **What can the BAA do?**

The Board by law has the authority, by a simple majority vote, to change your assessment for a period of one year. Note that this is not a permanent change and you should not expect that it will automatically be repeated next year.

In some circumstances the Assessor's Office may, upon review of the Board's decision, change your assessment for the remainder of the five-year cycle.

### **Do I need a Lawyer?**

No. You have the right to be represented by an agent, who may or may not be an attorney.

### **What if I don't agree with the Board's findings?**

You may to appeal the Board's decision to a court of law.

### **Should I pay my taxes if I choose to appeal?**

Yes. You should pay your taxes to avoid interest being added and to avoid court costs, including attorney's fees, if your non-payment is referred for collection. Keep in mind that any overpayment found by the court in your appeal will be refunded.

### **What about the elderly and veterans who may be on fixed incomes or situations where special exemptions might occur?**

The Assessor is required by law to assess property and not the people who own it. As sympathetic as the Assessor may be, State Law does not permit the Assessor to consider matters of hardship. All property is appraised at fair market value and assessed at 70%. However, qualifying persons over the age of 65 can apply for the Circuit Breaker program in the Assessor's Office between February 1 and May 15. There are also exemptions for those who are veterans, disabled, or blind. If you are now receiving an exemption, it will be

**Isn't fair market value  
what I paid for my  
property?**

Not always. You may have purchased your property years ago when prices and values were considerably different. The true test is what your property would sell for in today's real estate market.

**When will the  
new assessments  
be effective?**

The revalued assessments will create the October 1, 2008 Grand List.

The tax bill you receive in June of 2009 will be based on your new assessment. You will be notified in January 2009 of your new assessment

**How are my taxes  
determined?**

The Grand List is the sum total of all taxable property in Essex and is prepared by the Assessor. During the town budget process the financial needs of the town are examined on a department-by-department basis. The Board of Finance and the

Selectmen arrive at a final budget, which must be paid for by taxes. This budget must then be approved by either a town meeting or by referendum. The Board of Finance then sets the Mill Rate, which is the dollar amount of tax due per \$1000 in assessed property in town.

In 2007 the mill rate in Essex was 16.9, so for example, if your market value were \$300,000, your tax bill would be  $\$300,000 \times .70 \times .0169$ , or \$3,549.00.



**What if I disagree with  
the market value on my  
property?**

Connecticut State Law provides for municipal Boards of Assessment Appeals (BAA). If you feel that your value is incorrect for any reason you have the right to file a Petition to the BAA, but you must do so before February 20 of any given year.

Dear Property Owner,

This Guide has been designed to answer some of your questions regarding the 2008 Essex revaluation. We would encourage you to read all the information provided, and hope that you will find it beneficial. If you have any further questions, please contact our office.

Respectfully,

*Jessica Graves*, CCMA II, AAT

Assessor

Telephone: 860-767-4340

email: [assessor@essexct.gov](mailto:assessor@essexct.gov)

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Dear Neighbor,

Our Assessor conducts the complex task, required by our State laws, of revaluing your property. We felt that this Guide would be helpful to you in better understanding the revaluation and your rights. Essex prides itself on its care in these matters. You will find our town staff helpful and professional. Please feel free to contact the town staff or me on any matter regarding the Town.

Sincerely,

*Philip J. Miller*

First Selectman

Telephone: 860-767-4350

email: [pmiller@essexct.gov](mailto:pmiller@essexct.gov)

# QUESTIONS & ANSWERS

## **What is meant by “Revaluation”?**

Revaluation is a mass appraisal of all property within the town limits to equalize (bring about uniformity) in assessed values.

## **Why is revaluation needed?**

As the above indicates, the primary purpose of a revaluation is to eliminate any assessment inequities that may have developed since the implementation of the last revaluation (2003). A balancing or equalization of the town's real property tax burden among its taxpayers cannot be accomplished unless revaluations of property are conducted on a regular basis. Connecticut General Statute 12-62(b) requires that a revaluation of all real property be completed at least once during a five year period therefore our next revaluation



must be completed for the October 1, 2008, grand list.

## **How is my assessment determined?**

Your real property's assessment is based on its fair market value at the time of revaluation. Market value is determined by people, by activity in the real estate market and the general economy. The value of your property is based on an analysis of the entire market for the full calendar year before the completion of the revaluation project. The market can generally be defined as you, the person who sold the property to you, and the person willing to buy it from you. In effect, the Assessor does what you would do to determine the selling price when putting your property up for sale, only the Assessor has specific guidelines to follow. Some of the factors that are examined for each property are: location, size,

quality of construction, age of improvements, topography, utilities, zoning, restrictions, if any, etc. Your field card is available from the Assessor's Office and contains a detailed list of the factors used for your property.

Once your property's market value is determined it is multiplied by a state-mandated factor of .70, or 70%, to determine your assessment.

## **How will I know if my assessment is equitable?**

There are two very good methods of determining this. First, compare your property to similar properties that sold in the previous year. Your value should be in line with these sale prices. Second, if no recent sales are available, compare your assessment to other similar properties in your area using the public access computer or street listing of values available in the

Assessor's Office. The information will also be available on-line at [www.essexct.gov/departments/assessor](http://www.essexct.gov/departments/assessor) after the notices of assessment have been mailed.

Remember, very few properties are exactly alike. Your value should be comparable, but it seldom will be exactly the same as what seems to be a similar property.

## **Why did my land value change differently than my building value?**

Since building costs have not increased as much as total values, the bulk of the total



increase, if any, is attributable to land. This makes sense when you consider that land is limited in supply.